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Statement submitted by Arab NGO Network for Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Statement*

With the adoption of Agenda 2030 in September 2015, the international community made a universal commitment to achieving transformational development and leaving no one behind. This new agenda should be considered as an opportunity to address global challenges with common but differentiated responsibilities. All development actors should be mutually accountable for its implementation and results. They should consider lessons-learned from the Millennium Development Goals and aim to resolve the shortcomings. They should adopt a comprehensive development approach and undertake a qualitative and quantitative measurement of progress.

Moving from commitments to results will not be an easy task. Systemic failures including an unfair trading and investment system; neo-liberal economic policies, human rights violations and deepening inequalities are still rampant. The financial system continues to allow tax havens and to address this we need a new, efficient and transparent regulatory framework. Violations resulting from discriminatory legislation, policies and actions worsen inequalities, particularly for women. Respect for human rights and fulfilment of obligations including ensuring the maximum available resources fail, given the budgetary allocations to military spending versus social sectors like education, health and development. This securitarian approach limits the availability of resources and space for development actors. It does not address root causes of conflicts and terrorism, namely inequality and exclusion.

In this context, the Arab NGO Network for Development stresses that in order to transform the voluntary to-do-list to genuine change, implementation of the SDGs should be supported with:

- Strong political will and commitment by States: This should be reflected by the adoption of national sustainable development strategies. These strategies should be integrated in national priorities and supported with adherence to policy coherence between sectors in a comprehensive and holistic approach. They should be developed through a participatory, inclusive process with all stakeholders' engagement. Inclusive, participatory and binding monitoring and review mechanisms should also be embedded in these strategies to enhance accountability.
- An enabling environment for development actors, including civil society: The significant role of civil society in "enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation" was acknowledged in Busan. Yet, restrictive and repressive policies result in shrinking civil society space worldwide. An enabling environment for civil society is key for them to play their role in monitoring and implementation and in providing alternatives and advocating for change. This requires ensuring their independence, access to information and resources, respect for freedom of association, assembly and expression.

* The present statement is being issued without formal editing.

- **A legally binding instrument regulating the private sector: The role of the private sector is pivotal in Agenda 2030. Accordingly, global efforts to conclude an international legally binding instrument to regulate transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights must be advanced, and private sector accountability should be enhanced.**